

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L MOSCOW 14856

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TAGS: PARM, UR, US

SUBJECT: KRASNAYA ZVEZDA ON THE B-1

REF: A. MOSCOW 12897 B. MOSCOW 13944 (NOTAL)

1. KRASNAYA ZVEZDA ON OCTOBER 16 IN A STANDARD FEATURE COLUMN "INTERNATIONAL MILITARY-TECHNICAL REVIEW" CARRIES A DESCRIPTIVE ARTICLE ON THE B-1 ENTITLED "AGAINST THE SPIRIT OF THE TIMES". AUTHOR IS RETIRED COLONEL-ENGINEER A. SMOLIN (WHO DOES NOT APPEAR TO BE THE SAME MAN AS V.V. SMOLIN, WHO HAS BEEN ON SOVIET SALT DELEGATIONS). ARTICLE IS LARGELY A TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION, BUT ALSO MAKES THE FOLLOWING POINTS.

2. HISTORY OF THE B-1 PROJECT, SMOLIN WRITES, HAS BEEN A CONTROVERSIAL ONE, AND THE DECISION HAS NOT YET BEEN MADE TO GO AHEAD WITH FULL DEVELOPMENT AND DEPLOYMENT BECAUSE OF THE HIGH COST. HE SAYS THAT THE COMMAND STRUCTURE IN THE USAF HAS NEVERTHELESS CALLED THE BOMBER "THE MAIN SOLUTION TO THE PROBLEM OF DEVELOPING FUTURE PILOTED STRATEGIC SYSTEMS". HE ALSO MAKES THE

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POINT THAT CONSIDERABLE EFFORT IS BEING DEVOTED TO DEVELOPMENT OF

THE B-1'S PENETRATION CAPABILITY: "SPECIAL HOPES ARE BEING PLACED ON THE B-1'S ABILITY TO CARRY OUT ATTACK RUNS AT SUBSONIC SPEEDS AT VERY LOW ALTITUDES--30 TO 120 METERS. TO THIS END THE AIRCRAFT IS EQUIPPED WITH AN AUTOMATIC TERRAIN-FOLLOWING NAVIGATIONAL SYSTEM. IT IS CONSIDERED THAT SUCH AN APPROACH WILL MAKE IT MORE DIFFICULT TO TRACK THE AIRCRAFT BY ELECTRONIC ("RADIO-DIRECTION FINDING") METHODS. IN ADDITION, THROUGH SPECIAL MEASURES ITS SO-CALLED ELECTRONIC CROSS-SECTION IS SUBSTANTIALLY REDUCED; IN OTHER WORDS, THE TRACKING SIGNAL REFLECTION IS 50 TIMES WEAKER THAN, FOR EXAMPLE, THAT OF A B-52."

3. SMOLIN CONCLUDES HIS ARTICLE BY NOTING THAT THE PENTAGON IS PLANNING ON BEGINNING DEPLOYMENT OF THE B-1 IN 1978, AND BY POSING THE RHETORICAL QUESTION, "DOES IT NEED TO BE SAID THAT SUCH PLANS AIMED AT WHIPPING UP THE ARMS RACE AND FORCING MILITARY PREPARATIONS ARE IN CLEAR CONTRADICTION TO THE SPIRIT OF THE TIMES, TO THE HOPES AND DESIRES TO THE PEOPLE OF THE WORLD?".

4. COMMENT. WITH THIS ARTICLE KRASNAYA ZVEZDA CONTINUES ITS COMMENTARIES ON ISSUES OF CURRENT INTEREST IN THE SALT NEGOTIATIONS (SEE REFS A AND B FOR REPORTS ON SIMILAR ARTICLES ON CRUISE MISSILES). UNLIKE THE ARTICLES REPORTED REF A, HOWEVER, THERE ARE NO CLEAR REFERENCES TO THE NEGOTIATIONS OR TO THE TERMS OF SALT I--PERHAPS REFLECTING THE FACT THAT INCLUSION OF THE B-1 IN SALT II CEILINGS IS NOT A MATTER OF CONTROVERSY. IT NEVERTHELESS DOES SEEM TO DWELL IN DETAIL ON THE AIRCRAFT'S PENETRATION CAPABILITY--AN ASPECT OF THE CRUISE MISSILE ALSO STRESSED IN THE ARTICLE REPORTED REF B.
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